

Another goalless draw underlines Wanderers' need

FROM SAINTS TO SINNERS— AND CITY GOT AWAY WITH IT

Wycombe Wanderers 0,
St. Albans City 0

LOAKES PARK, Wycombe was no place for the weak on Tuesday evening as Wanderers' now serious lack of an effective centre-forward lured them into yet another goalless Isthmian League draw.

Only the physically strong were likely to make any headway—St. Albans, still smarting from their F.A. Cup exit to Erith and Belvedere last Saturday, saw to that.

With both Childs and Butterfield absent through injury, Bill Broomfield by himself missed the support of his regular co-strikers.

LUCIFER'S MEN

Thus the Saints (although on Tuesday's evidence Lucifer has claimed several converts) soon grew disenchanted with the everything-into-attack policy which had livened the first half; and the latter stages degenerated into an unfunny farce, where it seemed every other tackle left one player or another sprawled out on the ground.

Offender-in-chief, Bill Ratty, got the full lash of a large Loakes Park crowd, and deserved far more than just a few words from referee Mr. K. D. Franklin (Stanmore) for some of his extra activities.

In fact Mr. Franklin should have clamped down much quicker and much more menacingly. Instead he let control slip from his clutches.

Into the Wycombe line-up for their first competitive 90 minutes of the season came Dave Thomas and young Keith Stephenson, who after an adequate first half found the second period goings-on a little difficult.

Surprisingly, Stephenson had replaced Lou Temel as opposed to the off-form Charlie Gale.

Keith Samuels moved back into the spearhead position in place of Vince Faulkner, but had neither the weight nor ability to slip the attentions of centre-half Dave Lawrence; which just about cancels out almost every candidate for the number nine shirt, within the club's present ranks.

And until this situation is resolved, the championship race will be run over an essentially uphill course.

The reliable Tony Horseman, with an ounce of luck, would have made a breakthrough at some time or other. After 11 minutes Paul White, inadvertently by the look of things, managed to put his head in the way of a powerful driver; then four minutes later, Horseman again went through only to have 'keeper Tony Mackie whip the ball off his feet.

On 30 minutes, Wycombe's number ten delivered a testing overhead kick from 30 yards and within seconds cut himself out another foiled chance to poke the ball home.

The tempo had been fast and the emphasis placed on attack by both sides for the most part before half-time. But a dreary 20 minutes from the resumption pointed directly to another stalemate.

The last quarter of the game began with Mr. Franklin ticking off Ratty for a diabolical push that added to previous incidents might easily have meant a booking.

MORE PUSH

More pushing, this time the legitimate kind of attacking,

emerged as the play sprang back to life.

With 20 minutes to go, Lawrence made a staggering clearance from a Geoff Anthony shot heading goalward.

A minute later, Ratty, beaten to the tackle by Len Worley, proceeded to hack his opponent down from behind, but once again kept his halo in the ref's eyes.

The Saints breathlessly turned back a burst from Wycombe's forwards and saw a quick-fire Delaney header go high.

Then it was the visitors' turn with a series of corners that brought fine leaping interceptions from John Maskell who also covered one of the few shots loosed his way, when former Barnet left-winger, Tony Turley tried a strong angled volley on the run.

Its seventh "shut-out" in 12 league matches speaks volumes in praise of Delaney's back row, and underlines the brick-wall form of Maskell so far this season.

But, as manager Brian Lee was first to admit on Wednesday, Wycombe don't deserve their high placing. Does anyone know of a striker with a happy tendency towards scoring goals?

Wycombe: J. Maskell; K. Stephenson, C. Gale; I. Rundle, J. Delaney, D. Thomas; L. Worley, B. Baker, K. Samuels, A. Horseman, G. Anthony. Sub: K. Ward (not used).

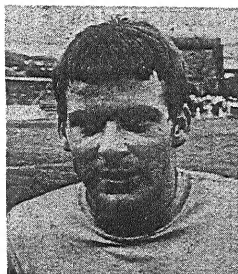
St. Albans City: A. Mackie; P. White, L. Burgess; P. Wood, D. Lawrence, D. Neville; J. Oxley, W. Ratty, V. Lucas, W. Broomfield, A. Turley. Sub: B. Simpson (not used).

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE

SENIOR SECTION

Leading positions

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sutton United	12	8	2	2	30	11	18
Leytonstone	12	6	4	2	24	9	16
Wycombe Wand.	12	6	4	2	19	9	16
Clapton	12	6	4	2	26	21	16
Enfield	10	6	3	1	14	6	15
Barking	12	6	3	3	28	14	15



Geoff Anthony, Welsh International who has so far had a very good season. He is a tricky ballplayer and has scored some useful goals.